

Newsmagazine for Northern California's Gay Community and Its Friends

issue

mid-july
ninety-five

the latest

volume seven
issue three

ACTIVISTS!

SPECIAL ISSUE: SILENCE = DEATH=THE SQUEEKY WHEEL GETS THE OIL.

INSIDE

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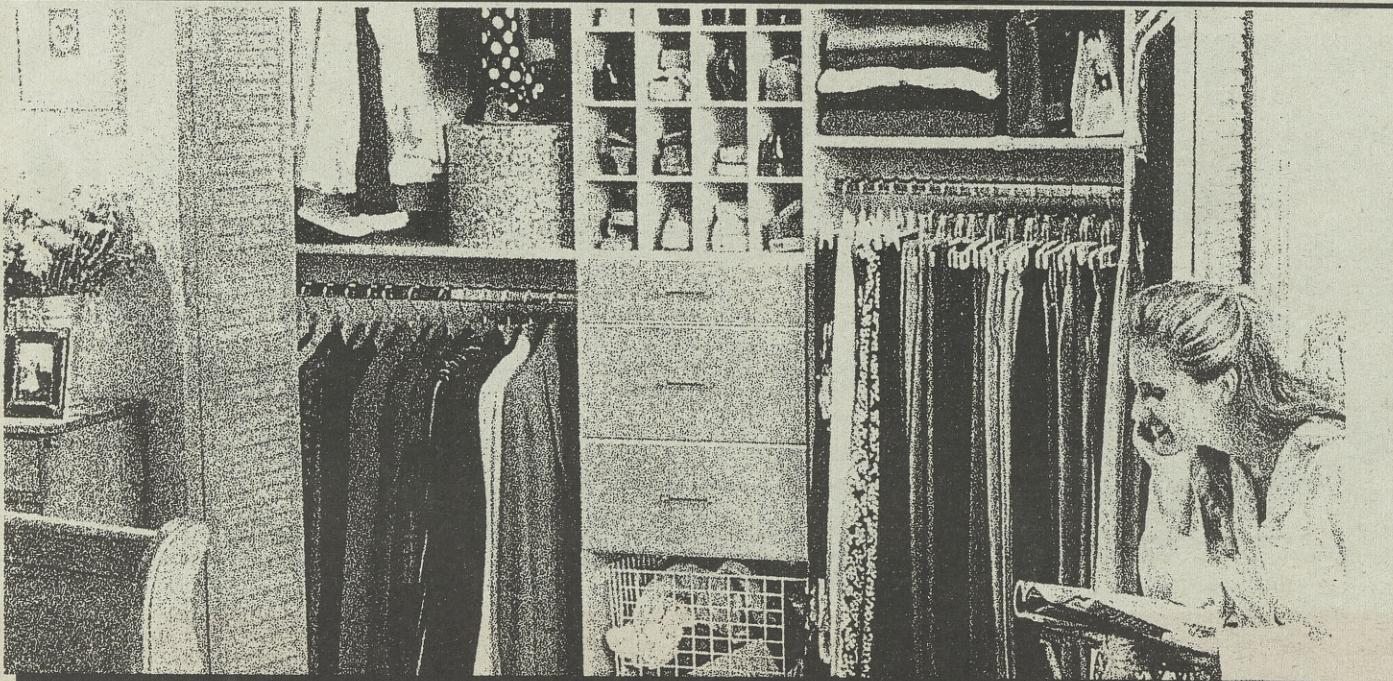
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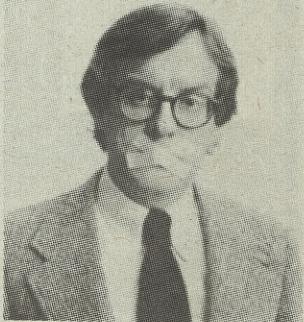
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publisher

KATE MOORE
business representativeFRED PALMER
office managerANDREW MOSHE
editorsMICHAEL GORMAN
CHRIS NARLOCHCHRISTINA ALLAN
layout

BILL PETERSON

TINA REYNOLDS

JOEI HEART

ANDREW MOSHE
advertising sales directorKEVIN COHEE
advertising salesFRED PALMER
copy editors

PATRICIA DIGIORGIO

LU McCABE
photographersSTEVEN LUSE
RINK
writersCHRISTINA ALLAN
DAVID BORAD

CELESTE BROWN

STAN CARLSEN

P.J. DUNKER

MICHAEL GORMAN

BILLIE JEAN JONES

C. LICHTENSTEIN

BRUCE MIRKEN

CHRIS NARLOCH

STACY SELMANTS

RICHARD SHUMATE

REX WOCKNER
cartoonists

ALISON BECHDEL

JOE HOOVER

ERIC ORNER

DALE ZEITLER

THE LATEST ISSUE IS PUBLISHED MID-MONTH BY THE LATEST ISSUE PUBLISHERS.

MAILING ADDRESS IS P.O. BOX 160584, SACRAMENTO, CA 95816.

OFFICE ADDRESS IS 2528 CAPITOL AVENUE,

SACRAMENTO, CA 95816.

CONTACT PHONE IS (916) 448-3504, FAX (916) 448-8505,

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From the Publisher

by Kate Moore

I was hit with a brick on June 19th when I was given the diagnosis. I have leukemia. Suddenly I was faced with some choices that I did not anticipate, choices I did not ask for and did not want.

Not only does this disease have a long healing period, but it requires a healing period without distraction, a healing period where nothing matters but the disease and the positive energies needed to kill it. Despite the difficulty of doing so, I have made my choice. I choose to focus on the fight against this cancer, and because I intend to win, I choose to give it all of my attention.

It is with great sadness that I tell my community that this is the last edition of the Latest Issue. There will be no others. This publication has served Sacramento and the

greater Northern California community for seven years by raising awareness of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights. When we first started publishing, you never saw a gay or lesbian in the mainstream press. It

was too touchy, too hot a subject. That is changing now. We kept telling our story, and it proved far too interesting for the straight press to leave alone. They still don't cover us well, but at least they acknowledge that we exist. We have made a mark.

Not only has the paper been active in the past seven years in describing our lives, demanding our rights, and justifying our pride, but it has also supported

events that have built our pride: the Capital AIDS Walk, National Coming Out Day, the Rainbow Festival, A Tribute to Gay and Lesbian Veterans, The Lambda Fair; the list is long. Our labor for these events has been a labor of love.

Over the years, the Latest Issue has had some of the best writers in Sacramento and San Francisco. Many of them have been activists thankful for a forum to air the truth. Many of them have been writers, always searching, as writers do, to find and examine the stories, to get

Andrew Moshe

places and who is just pretending.

The lighthouse that illuminates



Thank You!

This community is truly my family.

Your many cards and letters of support

have touched me deeply

and filled my tough times with hope.

I love you all.
Kate

at the truth below the events. They are also activists in their way.

People have supported this paper because they care about the issues facing the gay and lesbian community. Information is power, and for us it is often survival as well. We need to know if our health or safety is threatened. We need to know if our lives are in danger. We must know who our friends are in high

the danger costs money to operate. Over the years we have had supporters and advertisers who have kept the paper going because they believe in what we were doing; they believe in the Latest Issue's purpose: to educate and empower the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender community.

It's only appropriate that this July issue was scheduled to be the activist issue. That's where this paper came from. It came from

I will heal. And I will be out there again, fighting for equal rights, because it's a part of me.

stand seeing people with AIDS die anymore. It came out of the mind that saw the rejection of a society that negates our relationships and tells us our lives aren't important.

It came from those passions we carry inside that will not cool until the last injustice is defeated.

I will heal. And I will be out there again, fighting for equal rights, because it's a part of me.

If there is a lasting legacy for the Latest Issue, let it be this admonition: if there is any part of you that needs to express itself -- do it! Sometimes there's no tomorrow.

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Really I Must Say!

History Is On Our Side

by Michael R. Gorman

E PLURIBUS UNUM. The language is Latin, the mother tongue that gave birth to the dialects which became Spanish, French, and Italian. The phrase should be familiar to anyone who wasn't asleep in History class. It is the official motto of the United States of America.

Epluribus Unum: it means, "Out of the many, one," or "out of diversity, unity." The men and women who played midwife to the birthing of this nation understood that unity, oneness, is born out of diversity. So vital was this concept in the minds of the founders, that it became the motto of the country, the one statement that represents the values for which the nation itself stands: Epluribus Unum.

It is no surprise that this phrase so captured the imaginations of the American visionaries. The eighteenth century was a time of great admiration for the "natural world," and unity from diversity is a concept that governs the very existence of natural life on this planet. No life can prosper outside the cooperative circle of other life forms. Each needs what the others can provide. We breathe in what the trees breathe out. We eat the plants that thrive on the rotted leavings of previous life. We are alive as parts of a continuous cycle of energy exchange. Isolation from this exchange is death, for trees, for fish, for flowers, and for humans.

continued on 6

Fond Farewell
Dear Readers,

As I sit to address this letter, my stomach is knotted, my eyes teary and my heart aches. I'm grieving the loss of an identity I've so proudly spouted for the past seven years. This is a very sad ending for such an important and powerful vehicle in our community. You must realize that it takes a very special person with an extraordinary vision to captain a ship like the Latest Issue.

Then there's the theme song from *Gilligan's Island*. "If not for the courage of our fearless crew . . ." and there have been a few, all worthy of mention. We've lost some; I remember being in awe of the talent of the paper's original designer, Michael Patterson, and the endless encouragement of my past lover, Ed Walker. I miss you both.

Others that have brought greatness to these pages have been all the writers, including the insightfulness of Arturo Jackson. I laugh at the thought of Kate,

Art, Lily Andrews and myself all crammed into a small second bedroom making decisions on how to get Ken Topper to help us get the Rainbow Flag to fly on the State Capitol for National Coming Out Day. We did it!

Then there's the theme song from *The Jeffersons*: "We're movin' on up . . ." to our new spacious office in Midtown. We really grew there. It gave credence to our effort. We took our focus off just local and began to address Northern California as a whole. Our covers exploded with the talents of Andy Markley and like a chameleon, we changed our logo and look.

It took money -- a lot of it to keep growing and changing and informing all of you. It took advertisers! Sometimes brave advertisers, but always loyal advertisers and I must now say THANK YOU. You gave me pride in my job, my work and especially in my community. You helped mold this paper, support this community and blossom my coming out and my career.

And for you Kate . . . thank you for your love, your listening, your friendship, and all those paychecks! And girl . . . listen to Gloria Gaynor!

May we all hope to live by your most recent words: "live your life and dance when you can."

Goodbye Latest Issue,

Kevin Cohee

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Quote, Unquote

by Rex Wockner

"The opening scene of 'Batman Forever' plays like a commercial for a rubber-wear shop, and throughout the movie the dominant images are of fetishistic gear: the belt buckles, boots, gloves, capes, mask. Batman would be a sensation in any leather bar, but 'Batman Forever' is at pains to show that he has heterosexual tastes."

- Film critic Roger Ebert

▼▼▼

"That's my personal business and it's no one else's business at all. I just don't feel like whether I'm gay or not should be an issue to people. I want people to watch me play golf for my golf skills . . . I find it hard to believe that someone is standing on the other side of the rope, going, 'Is Beth Daniel gay or is she not gay?'"

- LPGA 1994 Player of the Year Beth Daniel

▼▼▼

"Those uniformed Secret Service guards who donned rubber gloves to greet a delegation of homosexual elected officials shamed their service and embarrassed the White House . . . If this was an act of stupidity by low-level guards, then special training and administrative punishments seem in order. But if this was a calculated attempt to insult homosexuals, dismissal from the service is the only fit response . . . That such an event should happen not in some benighted backwater, but at the gates of the White House is a shocking reminder of how intolerant this society remains toward its homosexual citizens."

- New York Times editorial

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"I want to apologize for the inappropriate and insensitive treatment several of the participants were subjected to at the entrance gate of the White House. It was wrong. I deeply regret any insult or embarrassment you suffered. You are welcome in the White House and I look forward to continuing to work with you in the future."

- President Clinton days later in a letter to the gay officials

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"The gloves didn't even match their shoes! It was so breathtakingly terrible that even we laughed."

- Gay San Francisco Supervisor Tom Ammiano after the White House meeting.

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"My father's Republican. I'm a Democrat. We keep things on a very friendly and loving plane, so we don't really talk to each other about politics."

- Sonny & Cher's lesbian daughter Chastity Bono

▼▼▼

"I want to keep as neutral as I can in my shows so anybody can come and enjoy it and it will be meaningful for them. I didn't want people to think that now that I'm out, all I'm going to talk about is queer things. I think rock 'n' roll is genderless."

- Lesbian rocker Melissa Etheridge

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"Do we have sex? Yes, yes, yes."

- Lisa Marie Presley-Jackson, interviewed with husband Michael Jackson

▼▼▼

"If they want. It's on the level of purity and love and innocence. If you're talking about sex, then that's just a nut. That's not me."

- Michael Jackson, asked if he'll still let boys sleep over at his house despite last year's unproven allegations he had sex with a minor.

▼▼▼

"The gay community, with its strong professional basis and anti-government position, is naturally Republican. But only if we don't declare war on them."

- Gay U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson, R-Wis., to USA Today.

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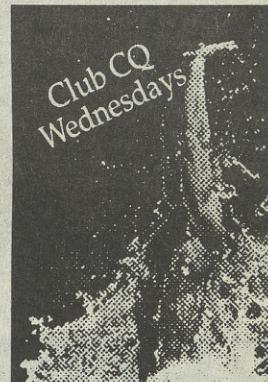
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GORMAN

continued from 4

Our physical survival depends upon the preservation of biodiversity. Likewise, our political and social survival depends upon the preservation of diversity among people. It is the way of the world, and we cannot escape it. Like a forest or an ocean, a country needs the varied func-

tions of the many to thrive. Uniformity, another type of isolation, is also death. Poppies in a field may look pretty all by themselves, but without the insects to pollinate, the bacteria to break down soil, the grasses to cut erosion, there would be no poppies. If we are to survive as a nation, we must vigorously resist the

forces that are attacking diversity in the human family. Though there are many such forces with varying degrees of success, the greatest threat to diversity in the United States today is the conservative Christian Right. Their vision for this country is one of uniformity, and therefore death. They have gained considerable influence despite the fact that their arguments for a return to Christian values are devoid of any connection to actual history.

Our country has not grown to its present state of power and influence and prosperity because we were, in some mythical past age a Christian nation, uniform in values and beliefs. On the contrary, we thrived because our forebears had the courage to denounce the misguided European attempts to Christianize everyone, to make everyone conform to some religious minority's concept of goodness. Thomas Jefferson called this theistic political impulse, "this loathsome combination of Church and State." Thomas Paine referred to the "adulterous connection of Church and State."

"Is uniformity attainable? Millions of innocent men, women and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, impris-

oned; yet we have not advanced an inch towards uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites."

-- Thomas Jefferson

"As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion . . ."

-- President John Adams

"If we look back into history for the character of the present sects in Christianity, we shall find few that have not in their turns been persecutors and complainers of persecution. Primitive Christians thought persecution extremely wrong in the Pagans, but practiced it upon one another."

-- Benjamin Franklin

The American right-wing conservatives of the 1990's, shackled as they are to the fundamentalist Christian theocrats, are the philosophical descendants of the Monarchs of England from whom the colonists fled. Those alive today who would deny us the religious, philosophical, social, cultural, racial, and gender diversity of the American population are nothing more than a recurrence of the cancer that the American Revolution fought to cut out of the body of the people.

Let me state this again, unequivocally. Those who seek to make us conform to their religious and political standards are a disease that rots nations. They are the heirs of King George, not the heirs of George Washington. They are un-American traitors to the ideals upon which this country was built. They are enemies to the Constitution. They do not seek to simply add another voice to the great Democratic debate. They seek to change the system into something decidedly un-Democratic: theocracy. They would deny the very core of our nation's founding: *E pluribus Unum*.

Whether out of ignorance or design, Pat Robertson is such a traitor. Pat Buchanan is a traitor. Rush Limbaugh is court jester for the traitors. Robert

Dornan is a traitor. Jesse Helms is a traitor. These are not loyal Americans. These are bigots who do not understand the most basic civic foundations of a free nation. Worse, in their hateful arrogance, they do not wish to understand. (Perhaps if we translated our nation's motto to English Only...) And their disciples are taking up arms.

It is about time that the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community stopped cowering before these enemies of Democracy and started recognizing that we walk the high moral ground. We are the common denominator in their hatred, and we, more than anyone else, can ferret them out. Many of our straight friends, personally and in Washington, do not see the depth of the threat because they have not yet felt the sting of exclusion. But we have. We have known taxation without representation. We have felt the oppression of religious persecution. As queers in a straight world, we have known what it is like to be governed from foreign shores. We have seen our rights ignored in favor of a more acceptable class of citizens.

Our hearts are as close to the founding fathers and mothers as it is possible to be in the last decade of the second century. We see. We understand. We are the one great hope for this nation's continued growth toward true political, social and spiritual health. We must claim our position in history or we will lose everything. And so will our straight friends and family. So will other minorities who are so busy trying to conform to their oppressors that they won't know what hit them once the powerful, white, Christian elite is done using them.

We cannot give in. The freedom to live our lives according to our own consciences is the reason tea was spilled in Boston and blood was spilled at Lexington. If this country is not allowed to continue absorbing the wonderful diversity of the human family, it will stagnate into something ugly and sick. It will turn pale, literally, and die.

For myself, for my country, and for those I love, I will stand up and demand my freedom to be who I am as I am. I will demand it in the workplace. I will demand it in the neighborhood. I will demand it on the bus and in the mall. And if I take some risks in doing so, then I will be in good company. I will at least be able to stand proudly with other Americans who have had tattooed upon their hearts: *E pluribus Unum!*

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AIDS-File

Survival of the Savviest

by Bruce Mirken

In a recent newspaper profile of Jeff Getty, an AIDS treatment activist of my acquaintance, the writer coined a wish I'd come up with myself: "The survival of the savviest." What it means is that in AIDS, knowledge is quite literally power--not, alas, the power to guarantee survival, but at least the power to have a chance.

It makes perfect sense: The approved, standard treatments are only partially effective and nowhere near a cure. By definition anything better, if it exists at all, must be either experimental or "alternative," out there on the cutting edge and not available at your local pharmacy. Getting one's hands on those with the most promise, not to mention avoiding the countless scams and dead-ends, requires knowledge and perseverance. It means learning about this disease, following research developments and trying your damnedest to stay a step ahead.

It works. I've seen people in desperate shape bounce back with the help of treatments that most PWAs and even most AIDS doctors didn't know about. And a couple of recent developments have underlined the survival advantage of being treatment-savvy. The first of these is the advent of tests to measure viral load—technically the amount of HIV RNA in your blood plasma. Two different versions are in widespread testing: Branched DNA and polymerase chain reaction (PCR). Both give a reasonably accurate reading on the amount of virus in a person's blood, usually given as the number of copies per milliliter.

Though widely used in research, these tests are not approved by the FDA for use in patient care and are not yet in standard use for that purpose. Because they are unapproved, many health insurers will not pay for them.

But a growing body of evidence shows a clear correlation between the amount of HIV in someone's blood and how well or poorly he or she does. For example, a study of 62 HIV patients published in the April 15 *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that viral load was the best predictor of who would go on to develop AIDS. Those with over 100,000 copies per ml. on their first measurement after seroconversion had more than 10 times the like-

lihood of developing AIDS as those with lower HIV levels. Data from several drug studies has shown a similar correlation between viral levels and patient prognosis.

Savvy PWAs have kept an eye on this research and know it argues powerfully for using viral load tests to monitor whether or not anti-HIV drugs are working or whether it might be time to switch therapy. A rise in viral load should give a much quicker indication that a drug has stopped working than other markers such as CD4 counts. While skeptics correctly point out that no one has yet done a study proving that switching treatments based on viral load numbers extends life, John James argues convincingly in the 6/16/95 *AIDS Treatment News* that definitive proof may take years and the inherent limitations of study designs will make it difficult to get clear results even then.

Common sense suggests getting your hands on every bit of data you can to tell whether or not your treatments are working, and noted AIDS researcher Michael Saag recently commented, "This is really the future of clinical practice. We need to be individualizing therapy." Savvy patients and doctors are already doing it—and fighting insurers, if necessary, to get the tests paid for. Another example of survival of the savviest is wasting syndrome. Wasting kills, and the only approved treatments, the appetite

stimulants Marinol and Megace, are of limited value. They don't deal with the underlying metabolic problems involved and the weight gained on them is largely fat. Megace is particularly problematic because it lowers testosterone levels—and low testosterone itself appears to worsen wasting, particularly loss of lean tissue.

Some knowledgeable observers think it will someday be considered malpractice to prescribe Megace without checking testosterone levels and adding testosterone replacement therapy if needed. But doing just that is

continued on 12

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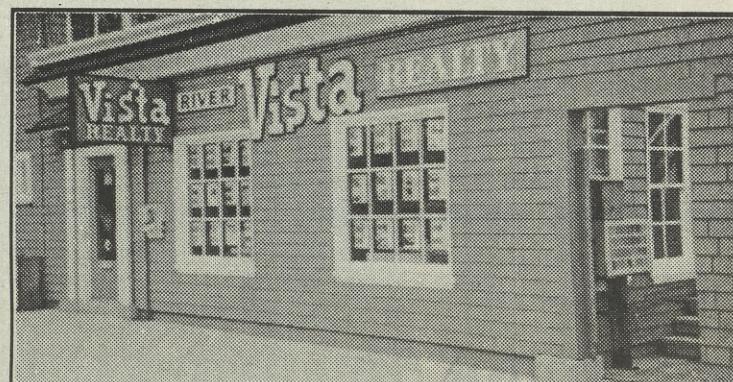
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Gays in the Military- Our Right to Serve

by Nancy Langford

Everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, should have the right to serve in the military. But how fair is our system?

Prior to President Bill Clinton's 'don't ask, don't tell' policy, gays could be court-martialed and discharged on conduct. By definition, proof of same sexual relations would be grounds. Clinton's new policy implemented in February 1994 changed all that. In a perfect world, that would mean gays could live their lives as normally as heterosexuals, as long as they didn't advertise their private lives. Life is not perfect.

According to Clinton Fein of Apollo Media in San Francisco, not only has the new policy not given gays in the military these rights, it has taken gays several

steps backward. The paradigm, he stresses, is that the old policy was much more clearly defined. A commander had to have proof of sexual conduct to take military action.

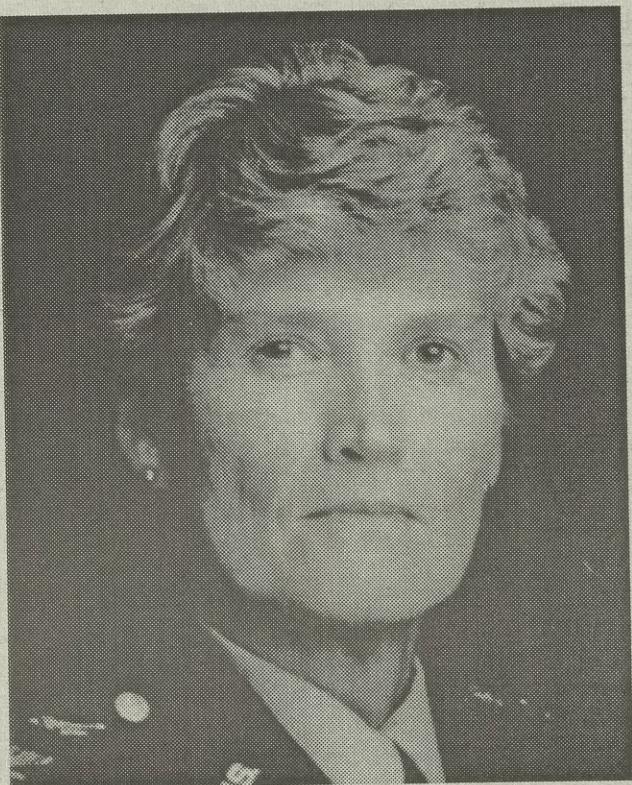
Today, if a commander assumes someone is gay, he or she can initiate an investigation. Fein claims the policy is so vague it is much more dangerous to soldiers than in the past. This gives a commander much more discretion, which can be even more harmful.

Fein's multi-media communications company created a CD ROM of Randy Shilt's book "Conduct

Unbecoming." Not only is the entire book included, but also congressional testimonies and documents that are regularly updated. The company continues to monitor all aspects of the current policy.

Most importantly, the CD ROM carries a current list of congressmen to whom gays can voice their opinions. Fein reports that Congress has received an onslaught of negative letters from people opposed to gay service-members. His advice to military and non-military people is to voice concerns to those who can make changes in the policy.

Fein emphasizes that this is not exclusively a gay issue. He uses an example of a servicemember being discharged for wearing platform shoes, which were seen as proof of gay orientation. Another example is a generic young gay person in small town America. The person's options could include suicide, a sham of a marriage or leaving home for the service and an offer of an



servicemembers have? The Legal Defense Network in Washington, D.C. works as a watchdog organization. Fein notes they document what is happening with the new policy which is then passed on to congress. They help prevent witch hunts. They also have a network of attorneys for questions and referrals. Most importantly, they can apply pressure to the military chain of command.

Fein cites the *Zoe Dunning* decision as an extremely important one since the United States courts recognized her worth

Ironically, many gays fit the typical stereotype of an excellent servicemember and thus are prone to being targets of the current policy emphasizing military status versus sexual conduct.

education, a right all should have.

Ironically, many gays fit the typical stereotype of an excellent servicemember and thus are prone to being targets of the current policy emphasizing military status versus sexual conduct.

Fein also points out that the new policy puts heterosexuals in danger of being targeted. Any type of behavior the military interprets as being 'gay' can instigate an investigation and possible discharge -- more proof that this is not strictly a gay issue. An example would be a woman who receives advances from a male servicemember. If she resists, she could be branded a lesbian.

What options and help do

as a soldier instead of siding with the military. He feels this historic decision puts the military in an awkward position since the courts acknowledged she was not only an excellent servicemember but her status and conduct make her suitable to remain in the military. How can they continue to discharge gay servicemembers with an excellent service record?

Fein and his CD ROM attempt to make it easier to voice an opinion. Our letters can make a difference.

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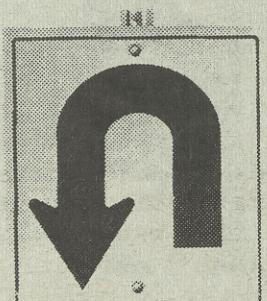
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Activism

Properly Accessorized Activism:

An Interview With The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence

by Michael R. Gorman

They skated across our television screens with a flourish in PBS's *Tales of the City*. Tourists from around the world often ask where they can be seen in San Francisco.

They held weddings outside Sacramento's notorious Capital Christian Center. They turned San Francisco's Halloween celebration into an AIDS fundraiser par excellence. The City's annual pride parade would not be complete without their outrageous habits (in both senses of the word).

Theater, street activism, fund-raising, caregiving, education, visual satire, irreverent compassion, biting humor, drag, political commitment: they are the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Anyone who has ever seen them wearing their flamboyant variations of nun habits and their colorfully trimmed whiteface does not forget them. Even their names demand notice: Sister Boom Boom, Sister X-Stacy, Sister Vicious Power Hungry Bitch, Sister Missionary Position, Sister Lily White Superior Posterior . . . if ever a group effectively said, "Pay attention!" it is the sisters.

The Latest Issue met up with a group of the sisters at the home of Gordon Elkins (aka: Sister Anal Receptive, aka: Cardinal Sin of the Carnal Craving.) Sitting in Gordon's living room with its fabulous view of The City (does any apartment in San Francisco NOT have a view?) were Sister Ann R. Key (Gretchen Lee), Sister There's No Place Like Rome (Sister Roma), Sister Dana Van Iniquity (Dennis McMillan), and Sister Anal/Cardinal Sin/Gordon. Given the amount of verbal repartee and the speed with which the wit flew, an interview with these men and women could well be called "camping with the sisters," yet underneath the humor and the showmanship, a deep and steady commitment to human rights is evident to anyone who is paying attention.

LI: Can someone give me a Reader's Digest condensed version of the history of the sisters for those readers who aren't familiar with them?

ROMA: Since you're the old-

est Dana . . .

DANA: A history! That will take two tapes! Oh god, in 1979 in Iowa four drag queens decided that it would be a kick to go out as nuns one night, and they conned a real Nunnery . . . is that right?

ROMA: No. Nunnery, that's a whore house.

DANA: That's a whore house! A real . . . convent . . . into lending them some dead nuns' robes. It was such a hit that when they came to San Francisco, they continued wearing the habits. The people wouldn't let them stop. Everywhere they went, it had to be the sisters.

ROMA: The reaction was more than they expected. It started as guerrilla theater and moved to activism and fundraising. And superstardom!

ANAL: There's a documentary in the works about the sisters.

DANA: It started out with just nun habits, and then got into whiteface and huge industrial length eye-lashes, and glitter, and now everybody's trying to top everybody. Feathers. Live animals on the head.

LI: The costumes are so outrageously different, yet you can recognize a sister; is there any kind of rule about what has to be included in each habit?

ROMA: We all wear white face, and we all have the comic, long eyelashes. We traditionally wear black and white. We have traditional habits, but sometimes we wear our party frocks.

DANA: The headpieces are supposed to be what we call the "ear brassiere." Most drag queens wear theirs down by the chest; we wear ours up on the head. We're a very mixed-up group! They're patterned after, what was it . . . seventeenth . . .

ROMA: Fourteenth . . .

DANA: Fourteenth . . .

ROMA and DANA: . . . Century . . . Flemish . . . Ladies-In-Waiting/nuns' . . . wimples.

LI: When the Sisters first

tried on all the makeup and caused such a scene. They said we could be there, but we couldn't speak.

DANA: And we were chanting, "We're here. We're queer. We designed everything you're wearing."

ROMA: Everyone said, "Say something. Say something." Everyone looked at me, so I started talking about how we represented millions of dollars worth of sales, and the security guards escorted me out. I said, "Geez, can't a nun even go shopping anymore?"

ANAL: We'd had plans before the Oklahoma City bombing to do major demonstrations during the U.N. 50 celebration that was here in The City. The problem was that security was so tight, and the area was cordoned off that we couldn't have made any impact with any of the people that even mattered.

ROMA: Friday I went and read names of people on the quilt. The quilt is on display at Yerba Buena Gardens in conjunction with U.N. 50, and the international panels are laid out.

LI: Where do your protests originate? Are they initiated by members, do people come to you and ask you to do things, do you get invitations from the outside?

ANAL: All of those. Or combinations.

DANA: We decided to do four parades recently. A bunch of us went to San Jose, Santa Cruz, of course San Francisco, and LA. Just marching by the people with the signs that say "God Hates Fags" and "Fags Burn In Hell" is an activist demonstration. I started singing "Yes Jesus Loves Me," but I changed the words: (singing) "Yes Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me, but he's not so sure about you." You know, just being out can be an activist thing.

ROMA: We have a standing engagement to speak at San Francisco State University. The last time we were out there, there had been rapes on campus. The police and the campus security weren't divulging any names, and there was a big controversy over the whole situation. We gave our usual lecture to the Human Sexuality classes, about 600 - 1000

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"Sister Sam Wants You!" to join the Queer Army Campaign.

started making a name for themselves they seemed a little more street activist. A little bit more in-your-face than they are now. What has changed?

DANA: We are still heavily street activist!

ROMA: We are still very in-your-face, but the number of demonstrations in the street, of taking an issue to the street has decreased over the years.

ANAL: I wouldn't say that there's all that much less. We probably get less coverage because we've been out there for so long. The gay newspapers in this city don't give us a lot of coverage because we've been around too long. If we leave San Francisco, then we get a lot of exposure because we're somewhat unique, like when we came to Sacramento. A little over a month ago there was a man who took his nephew to Bullwinkle's down in San Jose. He was refused service and was harassed by the staff for being gay. Rude comments about AIDS and fags were being made. One of our novices arranged a protest. We went to

Bullwinkle's to have a sit-in and be served.

KEY: We spoke to the manager and had information sheets and offered our services as sensitivity trainers. The manager was trying very hard to do the right thing, even though he didn't have good information to know what the right thing was. We gave him some ideas on where to start as far as sensitivity training for his staff, and as far as having explicitly stated policies so that in the future he's not going to run into this situation.

ANAL: Our activism depends upon something to react to.

DANA: Whenever there's a women's rights march, something like reproductive rights, we'll show up at that.

ROMA: We went to Nordstrom and demonstrated because they fired a woman who is a makeup artist who catered to freaks and drag queens and club kids. Juliet would do makeup for them at the counter. Nordstrom didn't like the clientele, and they fired her. A bunch of us got together and went down to Nordstrom and

continued on 10

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continued from 9

people in this giant auditorium, and during our presentation we said that the situation was unacceptable and that we were going to go get our anti-violence/rape whistles and come back and distribute them on campus. And we did. That was very spontaneous. It was a reaction to a cause that was brought to our attention that day. Sometimes that happens.

ANAL: Other times we are invited to join a protest by other organizations.

LI: Is there anything in the charter of the Sisters that determines how a protest should be handled or what should be addressed?

DANA: Well, there is one no-no. Since we are a 501-C3... C3? C3?

ROMA: C3PO!

DANA: A 501-C3, a nonprofit organization, we are not allowed to get into political endorsements. We can't tell people how to vote.

ANAL: We are allowed to address an issue of human rights in

a way that does not tell a voter how to vote on a proposition or a candidate. That's the only restriction.

LI: So your focus is?

ANAL: Human rights.

ALL: Civil rights.

LI: I heard a couple older Catholic women recently saying that they hate the Sisters, but they couldn't tell me anything about them. Do you get any flack still about dressing as nuns?

DANA: That's exactly the kind of people who comment! They say they hate us, and then you pin them down and say, "Exactly what is it about us you hate?"

And they say, "Ah... uh... well... you're just ruining it for the community!"

And you ask them, "Well, how is that that we're doing that?"

And then I take them to their Stonewall history lesson. "It was drag queens that allows you to stand here and argue with me in a gay bar!" And most women get the fact that we're not making fun of women. That we're actually honoring them, that we like

their traits. And all the nuns I've ever spoken to get it. They love us! We have some nuns who will come up to us every year at the parade and take a new picture, show us the picture from last year.

ROMA: We walk down the street and they cheer us! The habits we wish we had. Those nuns. She's kind of plain for a nun, but she's sweet. At one of my first demonstrations at the opening of *The Last Temptation of Christ*, this reporter from the LA times came up to me and asked, "How does it feel knowing that, you dressing as a nun are making fun of the beliefs of all these people, ridiculing their church, that you are hurting them?"

I said to him, "I don't think anything I could do in my short lifetime could compare to the bigotry and oppression that the Catholic Church has practiced over the years."

ANAL: I think the issue here is that we're fighting for freedom of expression, and we are pushing the envelope wider and wider. When the limits begin to restrict our expression, then that's when everyone else should become really worried.

DANA: But as well as considering ourselves fundraisers, we are also fun-raisers. Just our being in the vicinity of a group of people makes them laugh, either at us or with us. But it's laughter. We provoke it.

Perhaps that is a word worth remembering in connection with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence: provoke. They provoke laughter, thought and change. The bigots they simply provoke. What's not to love?

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Taking the Plunge with Same-Sex Marriage

by Christina Allan

Activists say it's almost certain that gays and lesbians will win the right to marry in Hawaii within the next year. But are we ready? And do we want it?

The Case

In 1991, three couples -- two lesbian, one gay -- challenged the Hawaiian government's denial of their application for marriage licenses. Because their state constitution has an equal protections guarantee, the Hawaiian Supreme Court ruled that the state's refusal to issue the licenses violated Hawaiian law. They sent the case back to court, requiring the state government to show a "compelling" interest for the discrimination.

"Legally, *Baehr v. Lewin* was a major victory for the rights of women," comments Tom Ramsey, of the Hawaii Equal Rights Marriage Project (HERMP). "The Court ruled that discrimination based on sex is subject to the same level of scrutiny as discrimination based on race. They made that statement categorically."

Amelia Craig, managing attorney for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund's (LLDEF) Western Region, says that because the Court has already made such a strong statement, the state is unlikely to sway them when the case is heard September 25.

The state is likely to argue that marriage is an institution for procreation, but this issue was resolved 50 years ago when the fertility requirement for marriage was rescinded. Disabled people and women past menopause who marry are also ammunition against the procreation argument, not to mention the fact that gays and lesbians have children. The state may also argue that children should have both male and female parents, but with only one discredited study ever having shown that gays and lesbians raise children any differently from straight couples, Craig doesn't see that argument going anywhere.

"The strict scrutiny test is virtually never met," Craig says. "We're very optimistic."

The strangest twist in the case came in February, when the Mormon church attempted to become co-defendants in the suit, hoping to argue the case with the state. After the circuit court rejected the request, they appealed to the Supreme Court. Appeals usually take one year, and in a recent flurry of motions they have tried unsuccessfully to either stay the *Baehr* case or speed up their appeal. Activists point out that the case only concerns the right to civil marriage licenses.

"It will have no effect on whether a church has to or doesn't have to perform a marriage ceremony," says Craig. Both she and Ramsey feel that even if the Mormons could present religious arguments, they would only hurt their case by inadvertently reminding the Court of the separation between church and state.

The Fallout

Assuming that same-sex couples do win the right to obtain marriage licenses, gays and lesbians would probably flock to the Big Island, don jasmine leis and make their unions legal. Under the "Full Faith and Credit" clause of the federal constitution, states are required to recognize the public acts and proceedings of other states; if a couple gets married in Hawaii, their marriage is recognized in Virginia. However, we've already seen three states -- Utah, Alaska and South Dakota -- scramble to ban gay marriages under their local marriage laws. If a state can show that they have a consistent and long-term policy against gay marriages, they would not be required to follow the "Full Faith and Credit" mandate, as with marriages between first-cousins.

LLDEF, together with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), and other national organizations are working to coordinate legal research in

every state to prepare for the state-by-state backlash we're already seeing.

This is where our local activists get involved. Joanna Cassesse, former director of the Lambda Community Center, said the center will be available for the distribution of materials and she hoped to hear from community activists interested in focusing on the subject.

"We really feel this is going to be the biggest issue of the century," comments Cassesse, "more so than the military ban, because this is less of a perception issue. It's a factual issue based on the laws on the books of Hawaii."

LIFE AIDS Lobby executive director Laurie McBride plans to start meeting with friendly legislators this summer to give them information so they are prepared for the media onslaught when the Court hears the case. This is a top priority for the lobby, she adds, and says they are also planning a drive in August to raise funds for a field organizer to travel throughout the state conducting forums and meeting with local organizers and religious people.

"We've seen that all the other civil rights movements have three ingredients," comments McBride, "grassroots organizing, media campaigns and the involvement of the churches." She's worried that the Traditional Values Coalition, led by the Rev. Lou Sheldon, is working on a federal constitutional amendment that would limit marriage between a man and a woman.

"It's one of those watershed issues," she comments, "and I think it really depends on how well organized we are."

Organizational Challenges

Surprisingly, this is the first time that all the national gay and lesbian and civil rights groups have rallied around a particular issue. Amelia Craig reels off the list of organizations, and Tom Ramsey adds that while the more established leaders shied away from the subject until recently, same-sex marriage is now seen as the fight of the '90's. It's also dramatically broadened the base of activists in the queer community.

"The issue recruits a completely different group of people," he says, "people who are

quiet, suburban, even middle class, and more lesbian couples than with any other civil rights movement."

Nevertheless, as HERMP and other organizations educate the community, they have encountered both questions and opposition. Ramsey feels that gay men often have a radical perspective that celebrates promiscuity over monogamous commitment, while lesbians have difficulties with the patriarchal history within the institution of marriage. He believes that transgenders would benefit from the right to marry, because you "don't have to be so picky about what your gender is", but admits he isn't sure how same-sex marriage will affect bisexuals.

There is also opposition from domestic partnership advocates, many of whom wonder what will happen to current partnership legislation and resent the primacy marriage would retain for identifying family structures. They don't think benefits like health insurance should be tied to marital, couple or employment status, and the more extreme advocates would like to see marriage abolished altogether.

HERMP, Lambda, NLGTF and other groups argue that marriage as a patriarchal institution is completely undermined when you broaden its very definition to include same-sex couples. They emphasize that no domestic partnership policies approximate the over 300 legal and economic benefits that come with marriage, including rights of joint parenting, adoption, custody, immigration and residency, dissolution and divorce protections, and benefits including pension plans, Social Security and Medicare. Even still, Craig says that Lambda's work on domestic partnership cases is equally important.

"We're in a pro-choice position," she says, "We're fighting for the freedom to choose to get married."

Same-sex marriage proponents also argue that this issue undercuts the rhetoric of the right, because it's harder to label gays and lesbians as promiscuous perverts when we're fighting for the right to civil marriage. Finally, activists point out that many of us can't escape the emotional, spiritual and other less

tangible needs we have to publicly celebrate our love as a marriage, and for our families, our friends and our society to honor us for so doing.

Personal Activism

There are several ways to get involved in the fight for same-sex marriage:

Come Out -- Our leaders agree that it's still the most political thing an individual can do. Homophobia drops as soon as people know a specific gay, lesbian or bisexual person.

Sign on to Lambda's Marriage Resolution --

The Marriage Resolution

Because marriage is a fundamental right under our Constitution, and because the Constitution guarantees equal protection of the law,

RESOLVED, the State should permit gay and lesbian couples to marry and share fully and equally in the rights and responsibilities of marriage.

Our national organizations are requesting that we take this resolution into our homes and workplaces and get as many endorsements as possible. LLDEF will use the signatures for public relations purposes. You can fax it to them at (212) 995-2306, or mail it to:

The Marriage Project
Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund
666 Broadway, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10012
(212) 995-8585

Donate -- From contesting the Mormon Church's motions to conducting legal research, our organizations are desperate for money. Even \$5 makes a difference, says Ramsey, adding that if everybody sent \$5 to Lambda, our rights would increase dramatically in the next two years.

Tom Ramsey ends by saying that despite all the energy he's putting into this cause, marriage isn't necessarily for him.

"Part of me feels I'm a bit old for it, that it's something you do when you're young and foolish." The 46-year-old mathematician adds that while his odds for matrimony may only be 50-50, he's eager for his friends to be able to wed.

"I think it's very important that the option be there."

The Lavender Angels: Messengers of Freedom

by Bret Cagle

The Lavender Angels do not consider themselves an elite group. Instead, they refer to themselves as just "regular people out there trying to help." This non-violent activist organization was created by Midge Marino and Shannon Lindauer after the tragic stabbing of Vincent Blades, on February 7, 1991. The murder was the motivating force for these heavenly messengers to don their halos and hit the streets.

They hoped to give some meaning to a gay man's death and to prevent further violence within Sacramento's gay and lesbian community.

They wanted to be a street patrol in Lavender Heights, deterring potential crime. Walking in groups of at least four and carrying hand-held radios, they quickly won the confidence of police officers and remained a behind-the-scenes, active deterrent to hate crimes and other violence against the gay and lesbian community.

Today however, we no longer

see their presence on the streets. They have a set of new goals, and are more concerned with being a more visible group. Catherine Callahan, the Angels' executive director and Deborah McConnell,

violent situation." Callahan and McConnell see the Lavender Angels as a bridging of the gap between the gay and lesbian community and the heterosexual community through education.

We teach people to defuse potential conflict psychologically and verbally, and about non-confrontational alternatives in potentially violent situation."

the organization's public relations director, speak of their intentions as "exposure" and "education."

"We are not only out there for street patrol or security, we are here for information. We teach people to defuse potential conflict psychologically and verbally, and about non-confrontational alternatives in potentially

While the interests of the queer community remain at the forefront of their agenda, their new vision also includes working at local events to help gain more visibility. Callahan admits that this new agenda is partly a consequence of a lack of financial support from the queer community.

"We are looking for some appreciation," she says, "we do the best we can with limited resources. But we have no wet-weather gear and no working radios. Support comes in spurts, then it's gone. And we have monthly costs as an organization to cover. We don't want needless charity, we just want support."

The non-profit organization is primarily funded by Callahan and McConnell, with help from voluntary dues of \$5 a month from each member. These funds are not adequate to purchase new gear and radios, and only cover some of the overhead costs of running the organization. Callahan identifies their financial crisis as a "Catch-22" situation, saying that without a consistent focus and regular presence in the community, it's impossible to get financial support.

"At the outset of seeking out the 'Angels', I found few average gay and lesbian individuals knew

anything about the current organization and [I couldn't] find any up-to-date information about them in any of the typical places, such as the Lambda Center or the Faces bulletin board," says Callahan.

Though the Angels' efforts as a street patrol are in limbo right now, they are working as security at special events and report a positive response to their efforts and presence.

Public visibility is the Angels' theme and focus for 1995, and they've even created a new motto for themselves: "We Walk In Pride." They are in the process of developing new uniforms, though their need for an artist and funds is slowing the process down. They hope their increased public visibility will come an increase in their membership, especially from gay men. Currently, the group is comprised almost entirely of women, although they are eager to welcome non-lesbians into their ranks.

In addition to acting as street patrols, the Angels need volunteers to handle phone calls, data processing and typing. And while they decline to list their specific number of members, they dream of the day they have "a thousand Angels" in Sacramento, not only providing protection for the gay and lesbian community, but out and about in the mainstream community as well.

"We work as a family unit," explains McConnell, "because we have to trust each other when we're out there. We have the responsibility to each other and our community." That's why, along with their monthly training seminars, they hold social functions like barbecues or potlucks, and even coordinate a yearly camping trip together. As well as learning to trust each other, they also try to avoid burnout, which is common with new members after the initial zealous period passes. McConnell and Callahan

themselves speak of fighting burnout, in the midst of attempting to accomplish their goals while continually trying to overcome their financial difficulties. Still, they don't have any immediate plans to turn in their halos.

"We're not ready to give up our dreams yet," says Callahan.

The streets in which Vincent Blades died no longer have angels watching over them. Four years have passed and the danger may not seem so near or real to us anymore.

"Before that night, it wasn't so real to us either," say Callahan and McConnell. "Hopefully it will not take another shocking reminder for us to regain our focus once again, and work together to do what it takes to consistently have a visibly present street patrol for prevention of hate-crimes and other violence." Unfortunately, such dangers are still a reality in Sacramento.

Anyone interested in helping put the wings back onto the Angels, or wish to become a volunteer, they can be contacted through their voice mail, at (916) 338-5012.

AIDS File

continued from 7

Savvy PWAs have followed the research and know that recombinant human growth hormone rebuilds lean tissue rather than just adding fat and are fighting their way through manufacturer Serono Laboratories' difficult and inefficient Treatment IND program to get it. Some are reporting remarkable results. Others are looking at a number of other promising treatments such as thalidomide (now available through at least two buyers clubs) and anabolic steroids.

What I'm suggesting is a hell of a lot of work. Reading newsletters, going to meetings, scanning medical databases, etc., is time-consuming and not lots of fun. Jeff, the treatment activist friend I mentioned at the top of this column and who, among other things, has taken growth hormone for a year, spends an amazing amount of time researching treatment and research issues.

But two years ago Jeff was told he should get ready to die. Today he called to ask if I wanted to go sailing with him on his boat in San Francisco Bay. I don't think it's coincidence.

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Activism

The Lesbian Avengers in Action

By Christina Allan

She was so nervous she started jogging around the parking lot. Pete Wilson and his aide were going to speak at McGeorge Law School's graduation ceremony and she was dressed up like a 7-year-old in pigtails. Their signs said, "Let Queers Adopt" and "Stop Wooing the Radical Right" and they sat in the front row. When the applause for Wilson died down, they charged the stage.

"It could have been worse," says 22-year-old Lesbian Avenger Amy Little, "this guy grabbed my arm and told me to keep moving and not to stop." Men in suits and earphones rushed the protesters behind the stage, but the Avengers had already succeeded. In television interviews after the action, Little and several other Avengers were able to oppose Wilson's rescission of a new Social Services policy that would have permitted adoption by unmarried couples.

"I think the community as a whole sees us as big and butch and a tad maniacal," muses Nora Gause, another Avenger from the San Francisco Chapter. Actually, she found some of America's most vocal dykes to be rather fem, not to mention funny, smart, and sexy. Her closest friends are Avengers and when they aren't protesting Pete, they host kissing booths or all-women dances to raise money for the group.

This outspoken group currently boasts over 60 chapters, from rural Idaho to London, England. Membership requirements are loose for lesbian, bisexual or transgendered women -- show up to a meeting and you're an Avenger -- and job titles range from "Keeper of the Voice Mail" to "Faxing Dyke." Two volunteer facilitators run the weekly meetings, with individual committees planning each action and then bringing them before the chapter for a majority vote.

"We see ourselves as very much in your face, very loud," comments Gause, "but we try to do everything with a sense

of humor." She launches into a story about the time several Avenger couples wrapped each other up in Saran wrap at the San Francisco International Airport. Frustrated that the CDC had never done a study of woman-to-woman transmission of AIDS, the Avengers located the CDC's offices at the airport, creating a ruckus and even surprising a flight from

Thailand with their polyethylene protest. Media-savvy stunts like these bring attention to issues vital to women's survival and visibility, the mission of the group.

"If you're angry and screaming, you get dismissed. It always seems like we're having a great time, even if we are mad."

Avengers who eat fire also get a lot of publicity. Maxine Wolfe, a founder of the original New York chapter, explains that the tradition started in reaction to the murders of lesbian Hattie Mae Cohens and her disabled gay roommate, Brian Mock. They lived in Salem, Oregon and during the push for the state's anti-gay initiative, neo-Nazi skinheads threw a Molotov cocktail into their basement apartment. A month later, at the Avengers' anti-violence march, a retired circus performer taught several women how to eat fire. The practice has continued, along with the accompanying chant: "The fire

will not consume us, we will take it and make it our own."

"The point is to remember why (they were killed), and that the right wing is not above murdering us," says Wolfe. "We can run away or we can do something about it."

Wolfe helped start the organization in 1992 because she was frustrated by the lack of lesbian activism. Mounting a grassroots leafletting effort, choosing an anarchist bomb as their logo, and protesting a Queens school board began the Avengers' call to action. Their confrontational techniques are similar to other groups, Wolfe says, but because they are all women, they may eat fire one day, and carry balloons for school children the next.

It's also important that their causes reach out beyond the queer com-

munity:

"We took over a couple of (vacant) apart-

ments in the Presidio to protest that they had not been classified under the McKinney Act, which says they

must be leased to the homeless for \$1 a year," she says. Gause and other activists camped out in the apartments, which featured hardwood floors and a Bay view. At the time, the Presidio was still a military base, so MPs arrived in full riot gear, broke down the door and stormed in to arrest them. A couple of people resisted and the MPs hogtied one woman.

"I was terrified," Gause recalls. "I knew what I was getting into, because I had done prior activism, but not to this extreme."

Like any other organization, the Avengers have internal problems. Little says that within their chapter, women have left because of power struggle issues, so they are making a concerted effort to increase mentoring and share knowledge. There's also a widespread push for diversifying the group, especially racially. Wolfe estimates that while only ten percent of

their national membership are women of color, this percentage includes many of the organization's most active mem
continued on 18



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Transgender Activism Gaining Momentum

by Billie Jean Jones

Trans-people are getting their gender agenda into civil rights protection. San Francisco added "gender identity" to the protected classes list under its Human Rights ordinances. Santa Cruz and Minnesota already had such civil protection.

Recently, the International Law Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP), Transexual Menace (TM or The Menace— one s, thankyou), Transgender Nation (TN— a surviving splinter group of Queer Nation), and It's Time America (ITA— a collection of state lobbying groups) have been lobbying congress to include "gender identity" in the language

of the Employment Non Discrimination Act (ENDA). While many do not believe the currently constituted congress will pass ENDA (it failed in '94), trans-people are calling for a Lobby Congress Day on October 3 & 4. This activism has generated a conflict between some trans-groups and the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF), a principal lobbying organization for ENDA.

In March of 1995 several transgender activists directly lobbied members of congress, including an aide to one of the House principal sponsors of ENDA. Direct lobbying was seen as the best way to inform members of congress and their staff, because as ICTLEP contends, in the previous July, HRCF had successfully prevented ICTLEP and ITA from testifying at the '94 Senate ENDA hearings. In addition to congress, the lobby group also met with members of HRCF and gave them a transgender inclusive draft of ENDA '95 that had been prepared in November 1994 with Senator Jeffords (R-VT) office. Subsequently, HRCF staffers expressed some concerns and anger that transgendered people were attempting to educate congressional members and staff that (1) transgendered people were excluded from ENDA; (2) that a transgendered-inclusive version of ENDA '95 had even been prepared.

In June '95 the ENDA bill with '94 language excluding transgender protection was introduced. According to ICTLEP, congressional insiders have said that HRCF "played hardball" to exclude transgendered people. An analysis that inclusion would cost twenty votes seems to be the underlying political reason, both this year and last.

The internet has been recently filled with all manner of accusations, lamentations, and calls to action, both to shame HRCF for "dumping" transgendered people, and to escalate direct lobbying of congress.

HRCF has responded by stating they are "open for dialog." HRCF additionally "...offered to work with the transgendered community to explore different strategies... we do not think that changing the language of ENDA... is the best way." (Internet "Issue Statement" June 30, 1995). HRCF's different strategies are to pursue case law, which is to say, "exclude you," according to The Menace's response.

Phyllis Randolph Frye, Executive Director of ICTLEP and a

long-time (20+ years) activist for lesbigay and transgender issues (all three MOWs; transgender speaker at two) responded to what she terms a "sell-out" by HRCF by escalating the coordinated lobbying effort to directly lobby congress October 2 & 3; has called for an International Transgender Employment Day on September 4 (Labor Day in the US; Sept. 3 in the rest of the world); has appealed to all other Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual groups to shame HRCF for their discriminatory omission and dumping of transgender-inclusive legislation.

Riki Anne Wilchins, one of the originators of Transexual Menace, which was formed during the transgender protest against Stonewall 25's omission of "transgender" in the title as promised, has helped direct protests and leafleting against HRCF in several states.

Neither of these two long-time activists are assimilationists. They are claiming that HRCF has sold out the transgender inclusion because upsetting the two-gender apple cart isn't the image of Lesbians and Gays that HRCF wants to project. In fact, some would argue that transgender issues are not lesbigay issues.

Phyllis points out that many transgendered people are in legal same-sex marriages because they refused to divorce (and assimilate) prior to legally changing gender/sex; that employment discrimination is exactly the same— can be fired on the presumption, upheld on admission; that even if ENDA could pass, it wouldn't provide any protection to a homosexual drag king/queen. In fact, the language of transgender-inclusive states: "Nor shall individuals be denied the right to secure and retain employment, or to receive just compensation for their labor, by virtue of their chromosomal sex, genitalia, assigned birth sex, initial gender role, or exercise of gender rights." Thus, it broadens protection for everyone, transgendered, intersexed (there are 72 sex chromosomal combinations) or mono-sexed females and males, as well as androgynous people; it would protect butch women and effeminate men whether lesbigay, pan-hetero- or asexual.

In January of 1995, the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association (NLGLA), which is the only gay-inclusive law organization affiliated with the American Bar Association, voted to

continued on 18

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F.I.S.H. Boycotts Phobic Pizza Hut

by Lynn Vigneault

FI.S.H. (Fighting Intolerance, Scapegoating and Hatred), a San Francisco-based organization which networks with other groups to monitor and challenge the activities of the religious right, has recently launched a consumer boycott of the Pizza Hut restaurant chain on both the local and national levels.

F.I.S.H. was created in September of 1993 in direct response to the appearance of Lou Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition at the Hamilton Square Baptist Church in San Francisco.

The group's organized boycott of Pizza Hut, begun in May of this year, was developed to protest the use of right wing radio and television personality Rush Limbaugh as a Pizza Hut promoter. Limbaugh — now infamous for his verbal bashing of minorities, and for his ongoing output of homophobic misinformation — is featured in a Pizza Hut commercial praising both the pizza and his ego, while boasting of his knack "for always being right".

Says Natasha Vekic, spokesperson for F.I.S.H., "When big businesses use someone like Limbaugh to represent their products, they are actually discrediting themselves. Pizza Hut, are you bigoted? Your actions indicate that you are."

Vekic states that the boycott's goal is twofold. First, an

apology is being demanded of Pizza Hut to the minority groups which are regularly attacked by Limbaugh on his radio and television shows. Second, F.I.S.H. asks that Limbaugh's contract — which expires in July — not be renewed.

Other companies which formerly used Limbaugh to push their products have felt some heat from consumers. While not publicly mentioning any buyers' backlash as the reason, they have quietly opted not to renew their advertising contracts with Limbaugh. Vekic adds, "Given that he has been booted as spokesperson for Florida Orange Juice and Snapple, we can only conclude that Pizza Hut believes that Rush's sexist, racist and homophobic views are consistent with those of Pizza Hut."

F.I.S.H., in conjunction with G.L.A.A.D.(Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) has begun a postcard campaign directed at Pizza Hut. Cards were distributed at the GLAAD booth during the San Francisco Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgen-

der March on June 18th. Boycott kits have been disseminated to nearly 100 activist groups nationwide, and activists are also being summoned with pleas for help on the Internet.

According to Vekic, the boycott is steadily gaining momentum here in California and across the country. There even has been a note of support from a lone pro-

tester in Australia.

To date, says Vekic, Pizza Hut has issued no direct response to the boycott.

Its corporate officials claim that Limbaugh is just one of many celebrities appearing in their commercials, and that Pizza Hut does not necessarily endorse the views of these celebrities. No information has

been released regarding the renewal of Limbaugh's contract.

Voice your opinion to Pizza Hut by:

— calling toll free: 1-800-358-2222 — e-mail: webmaster@pizzahut.com

— snail mail: Pizza Hut, Consumer Affairs,

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the latest events

SACRAMENTO

JULY 14

Shakespeare in the Park - "Taming of the Shrew" and "Love's Labor's Lost" through August. \$7 general admission at William A. Carroll Amphitheater in William Land Park, 15th Ave. & Land Park Dr. Call (916) 558-2228 for specific dates and ticket sales info.

"Visual Sensations", the photographic medium on display at Blooming Art through August 4. 1901 Capitol Ave. Call (916) 442-3800.

"Murder on the Nile", Agatha Christie's murder-mystery. Through September 10 at Garbeau's Dinner Theatre, 12401 Fulsome Blvd., Rancho Cordova. (916) 985-6361.

Two woman show opens at Matrix Gallery. Valerie Winslow, figurative oil paintings and Beth Edwards, still life paintings, through August 19. 1725 I Street, (916) 441-4818.

JULY 15

Easy Twenty-five mile bike ride along Sacramento River, hosted by Different Spokes Bicycling Club. Leaves from Zoo in William Land Park, S. Land Park Dr. at 15th Ave., 10:00 a.m. (916) 962-7434.

JULY 17

"The Maids", an Other Theater production by gay playwright Jean Genet, to be presented July 17, 18, 24 and 25 at 832 7th Ave, 8:00 p.m. Admission is free but donations are welcome. (916) 731-4866.

Sacramento Women's Chorus rehearsal from 6:30-8:30 p.m. New members always welcome. (916) 424-4411.

JULY 19

"Advertising on the Internet", presented by Sandra Nomer of Fortune 800 for the Lesbian & Gay Business Alliance. 7:00 p.m. at Carrows Restaurant, 28th and J Street. Free to first-time guests. (916) 863-9733.

Sacramento Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, general meeting at Lambda Community Center, 20th & I Streets, 7:00 p.m. (916) 484-5636.

Club CQ inside Jammin' Jo's presents "Shower Dancers." \$2 cover 21 and over, \$4 cover 18-21. (916) 682-4939.

JULY 20

Quintessence, a fundraiser to benefit the Sacramento Men's Chorus trip to GALA. Hors d'oeuvres, hosted bar, silent auction, entertainment by Entourage. 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. in

the Biscayne Room at Vizcaya, 2019 21st Street. \$25/person. (916) 444-5213.

JULY 22

Greywolf Barbecue Party, at Greywolf Temple, 148 33rd Street, 8 p.m. Free. (916) 498-9016.

JULY 23

Hilly 30 mile bike ride from Sutter Creek to Volcano in Gold Rush Country, hosted by Different Spokes. Call (916) 962-7434.

Sacramento Women's Chorus from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. New members always welcome. (916) 424-4411.

JULY 26

Club CQ inside Jammin' Jo's presents "Shower Dancers." \$2 cover 21 and over, \$4 cover 18-21. (916) 682-4939.

JULY 29

Bike ride along American River from Old Town. Meet in front of railroad museum on I Street at 9:00 a.m. (916) 962-7434.

JULY 30

White Water Rafting - Club CQ event. For more information on any CQ event, call (916) 682-4939.

SAN FRANCISCO

JULY 14

Bay Area Art Benefit Show, hosted by Josie's Cabaret and Juice Joint, through July 31. Paintings, photographs, mixed media on display and for sale by local artists will benefit various AIDS groups. 3583 16th Street at Market, (415) 861-7933.

JULY 16

Tashen Books presents a special beefcake party at Club Townsend. 177 Townsend St, San Francisco.

JULY 22

Live Tribute to ABBA with Bjorn Baby Bjorn at Club Universe, 177 Townsend Street. \$10, doors open at 9:30 p.m. (415) 985-5256.

JULY 31

The San Francisco premiere of "Jeffrey," starring Steven Weber, Patrick Stewart and Sigourney Weaver at the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre. Special appearance by screenwriter Paul Rudnick. A benefit for AIDS Benefits Counselors & AIDS Emergency Fund. Tickets, (415) 398-5352.

AUGUST 19

Be-Bop Bandstand, a '50s and '60s dance party for women. Presented by the De Castro Sisters of San Fran-

cisco as a benefit for the Women's Cancer Resource Center. 8:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m. (swing dance lessons from 8:00 - 8:30) at the Ramada Hotel Crystal Ballroom at 1231 Market & 9th. \$12 in advance, \$15 at door. (415) 648-3331.

TAHOE & RUSSIAN RIVER

JULY 15

Women Only Dinner Dance Cruise, hosted by the Trellis Foundation and Lambda Association. Dinner, dancing, romantic evening on Lake Tahoe. \$50/woman. (707) 747-5068.

JULY 16

"Meet the Lesbian & Gay Businesses of Sonoma County", presentation at 8:00 p.m. by ClubHeaven, at the Funhouse, 120 5th @ Davis, Santa Rosa. (707) 544-6653.

JULY 23

"Make a Date Party", open at 4:00 p.m., go go boys and women, DJ dancing, by Club Heaven at the Funhouse, 120 5th @ Davis, Santa Rosa. (707) 544-6653.

JULY 30

"Make a Date Party" Go Go Boys & Go Go Women all day & night at Club Heaven/ the Funhouse, 120 5th @ Davis, Santa Rosa. (707) 544-6653.

Dykes To Watch Out For



Exclusive Interview With Patricia Nell Warren

Wise Woman, Gentle Activist

by Michael R. Gorman

Most people know her as the best-selling author of *The Front Runner*, the first mainstream American novel about the love between two men. The book has sold over 10 million copies in 7 languages. Indeed, her glowing reputation as an author is well-deserved. She published her first story in the *Atlantic Monthly* at the age of 17. That story, *Slave In The Sky*, won the magazine's College Fiction Prize for 1954.

She went on to publish the novels *The Front Runner*, *The Fancy Dancer*, *The Beauty Queen*, and *One Is The Sun*. Her essays and stories have appeared in numerous periodicals, including *The Los Angeles Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Advocate*, *Modern Maturity*, *Reader's Digest*, and *American West*.

Patricia attended Sacramento's Lambda Freedom Fair on June 10th (which she called one of the nicest pride events in the country) and signed her books at the Tower of Books sponsored Author's Table. She featured the 20th Anniversary edition of *The Front Runner* and the sequel to that novel, *Harlan's Race*, both products of her new publishing house, Wildcat Press. Patricia also excited Sacramento fans by reading from the fair's acoustic stage a poetic passage from *One Is The Sun*, and then donating her personal copy of the book as a gift to the new Poet Laureate of Lavender Heights, Nancy Hugman.

By the time Patricia's interview with the Latest Issue was to begin, she was no longer just a visiting celebrity, she was an old friend to those in Sacramento's gay community who had had the privilege of interacting with her. She is too genuine, and too genuinely interested in people to remain long on a pedestal. She would rather sit face to face and talk. Though a resident of Los Angeles, she is a woman whose community knows few boundaries. She is a natural bridge builder whose notoriety in the 70's did not bring her the peace

she has found in more recent years. In fact, her life hit a terrible low spot after the publishing of *The Front Runner*.

"By the late 70's I was in a deep depression. The act of coming out politically and sexually, even coming out artistically wasn't enough. I was one of those people who believed that all my problems were magically going to be solved and my life was automatically going to be wonderful once I came out. It didn't work out that way. I had published three gay books, and I had run out of things to say. William Morrow [her publisher] was typecasting me, wanting me to go on writing about gay men forever. They were not interested in my lesbian novels. Nobody else was interested in publishing lesbian fiction. I was seriously contemplating suicide. My health was poor, and I didn't know what was wrong with me. It turned out I had Lyme disease. I was living right on the border of Connecticut where the disease was first identified. I can even remember the tick bite. The Lyme disease left a really big mark on me. I was not diagnosed until 1991, and by then I had had it for maybe twelve years."

Patricia sought answers to her malaise in a spiritual search that had begun in her college days.

"I was raised by a Presbyterian family. They sent me off to Sunday school, but they never tried to shove the Bible down my throat. They always told me that it was up to me to decide what I wanted to believe and what I wanted to think. When I was sixteen, I converted to Catholicism,

largely due to the influence of a girlfriend. She was not my lover, but we were very close. She had a really wonderful Catholic family. I wound up going to Catholic college. By the time I had done a couple of years, my mind started to wake up, and I started thinking about some of these doctrines that I had accepted so emotionally. On closer inspection, they didn't look so good. I could not swallow the idea that if you were not Catholic then you would go to hell.

"By the time I graduated college, I was out of the church. I began reading about other religions. I really had a problem through the sixties with the idea that God was father. Where were all the women in all of this? I really think the feminist movement was born out of many many women sharing the same feeling: where is the image of me in all of this?"

In seeking the image of herself, Patricia began searching out her Native American roots.

"In my family on my mother's side there is some Lakota blood, and on my dad's side there is Cherokee, Cree. I have a brother who is four years younger than me. We're very close. When we finally came out of the closet and said that we have Indian blood in the family, some of the family was madder about that than they were about my gay books and my coming out gay. Isn't that outrageous?"

"In Montana, the Indian wars, and the violence, and the reservations as prison camps are all still very close; it didn't happen all that long ago. The biases in Montana are still very strong against native people. Montana has just passed an English Only Law. That's not only a slap in the face to the Asian people who have been there since the gold rush and to the Latino people, it's a slap in the face to every tribe that lives in the state."

"Montana became a state in 1889, and they published the first history of Montana in that year. One part of that history consisted of biographies of great pioneers. You can sit in the historical library in Montana and find this pioneer and that pioneer white man. No wife is ever mentioned, but suddenly they have children. The reason the wife is not mentioned is that she was an Indian or Black or Chinese or mixed-blood woman. Period. End of sub



ject. How do I know? I've met the descendants who spilled the beans to me off the record. "My mamma was a Crow Indian" or "My grandma was a Black woman."

"So in my family this was under the counter for a long time. My brother and I always knew."

"When I was a kid, my family had an extensive library. There were all these books about native peoples, but they were all very Christianized, because that was what you were allowed to write. You had all these White anthropologists going in and talking to the native people who were basically prisoners of war. A lot of people don't realize that a lot of native people don't know their history. Native cultures and ceremonies were outlawed under federal law. They did not enjoy official religious freedom until the 1970's."

"I was working at Reader's Digest in 1971, and a book landed on my desk, a book called *Seven Arrows*. By then I had realized that the Christian anthropologists were not writing what they had been told, but what they thought they had been told. When I read *Seven Arrows* I thought, now here is real stuff. I read it and then put it away for a while."

When she hit her low in the late 70's, Patricia came back to the book.

"I reread *Seven Arrows* and realized there was more out there. I met the author, Wolf Storm, and got involved in the Breed [half-breed] network. He was very knowledgeable about all of the old bloodlines and how they interrelated; he was an expert in the old genealogies in Montana. We learned that we were distant cousins. My great grand uncle had lived for years with a native woman. She was his wife in the native way. It was through that marriage that I was related to Storm."

"Frank Waters, who just died the other day, was the history person for the Hopi. He was given a lot of the Hopi stories to put into print. I knew Frank. Frank was a distant cousin also. There's this huge network out there. Ultimately, I covered half the country in my travels. For the first time I was in a kind of thinking where I was the one who decided what was true. I wasn't having to accept anything on anybody else's authority because that's not the way it was done in the native world; everybody had their own authority. Ultimately you were the one who had to live with your

Continued on page 18

Patricia Warren

continued from 17

beliefs. They are intimate and personal to you, and no one else has the right to shove their beliefs down your throat.

"I was on the trail of writing *One Is The Sun*." I knew I wanted to write about medicine women. I thought there have to still be medicine women. Why doesn't anyone talk about them? I was on the trail of this, and that's how I came across the story of Earth Thunder. I found out that I grew up right there at the Deer Lodge Valley in a place where she had been... talk about karma!

"The place where the Deer Lodge people had their permanent camp was right where our ranch was. It felt like a lot of things had fallen into place for me, and that one of the things that I had done in this lifetime was to come back in order to tell the story. There were a lot of reasons why I came back, but that was one of them.

"Basically I was able to live the kind of seeking that I am writing about in *"One Is The Sun"*. I made the tools, I went to the ceremonies, I met the people, I traveled, all the time learning to put myself into the viewpoint of people living hundreds of years ago, and into their philosophies. They were becoming my own philosophies."

Discovering her spiritual roots renewed Patricia's desire to write and led to the completion of *One Is The Sun* and Harlan's *Race*. "After *One Is The Sun* I was able to think about coming back to write again about gay life. I had a whole new circle of understanding of myself as a person and my own journey as a spirit.

In the process of finding her true spirituality, Patricia also discovered another passion that has

given her a new niche in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender community. She is now deeply committed to the mentoring of young people in the community, especially young queer artists.

"If you look at the front runner, obviously I've always been very youth focused. When I was working on *"One Is The Sun"* in the eighties, the groups of people that I was learning with were very very child oriented, because in the native world, especially in the tradition that I was learning about, the children were everything. You had no future if you did not care for the children. The campfire in the tepee in the center of the camp was the symbol of the children. The fire does not stay alive unless you feed it and care for it.

"The kids in our society are very frustrated. People are not understanding that the violence is not coming from television; it is not coming from the movies. It is coming from their frustration at having no voice, no legal standing, very little power.

"This was a big part of my learning with these chiefs and healers. I worked with kids. I was in ceremonies with kids. I took care of the kids. I taught art to the kids. It was kids kids for about nine years. Although I physically do not have children, I learned that I need to be a mother and an aunty and a granny in the bigger sense. "When I moved back to Los Angeles in 1991, kids just began to drift into my world.

A Cal Arts student was at the Six Gallery on Santa Monica Boulevard at one o'clock in the morning doing homework, sketching for his art class. His assignment was to go sit somewhere and sketch live people. We called him over to our table, and he sketched me for a while. When the others

left, we talked until 4 in the morning. He ended up becoming one of my mentorees.

"Lots of times because our young people are more or less estranged from their families, they need support with their career direction. Back when I wrote the *Atlantic Monthly* story, I got nothing but support from my parents, from my school, from my teachers. A lot of these kids don't get that. Beyond the biases that they run into, and the gauntlet of disease they have to run out there, they have problems with unemployment, especially in the arts that older people don't understand. They want to give kids the typical unpaid internship, and these kids need jobs. If they are out at age 13 or 14, who's going to hire them? Who's going to hire my young drag queen? Who's going to hire my Latino kid with the nose rings and the bandanna. They've been in and out of school so much that they are farther behind than straight kids.

"We need more grassroots awareness among gay men and lesbians of the need for more youth support. It's one thing to read about the problems of gay youth in the press, and it's another thing to really be with the kids."

If there is one thing Patricia is these days, it is with the kids.

"In Los Angeles, we have one of the most progressive school districts in the country.

It's the second biggest school district in the country. We have a Board of Education with seven members, and four of the seven consistently vote to support the welfare of gay and lesbian youth. So we have Eagle Center, which is the continuation school for gay youth, for high school drop outs who had a real rough time in homophobic schools and runaways who come to LA from other

schools in other cities and parts of the country.

"I taught school there for six months. I read about Eagle Center in the *LA Times*. I called the school and went over to visit. It took a while to get them to understand that I wasn't there to talk at them about my stuff, but that I wanted to hear from them about their stuff. It took a while to trust me. The first thing I heard from them was, "We don't think older people give a shit about us."

So I said, "Well, here I am, an older person. Tell me what I can do. What do you want me to do?"

A hand went up and the kid said, "Well, we would like you to teach a creative writing class."

I said, "Great, you got it! When do we start?"

Another hand went up, "Tomorrow!" The next day I was teaching school.

Some of the kids I met at Eagle Center have stayed on with me as mentorees. What I discovered is how many gifted kids there are out there who really don't know what to do, how to get their art into galleries, how to get their art into comic books, how to get their poetry published.

They have been fractured out of any hope that they could do anything with their creativity. There is now a group of us in Los Angeles, a network of professionals in the arts. I started it with the assistant director of education at the Museum of Contemporary Art. We network with the community to help each individual kid. We give them what they would have gotten in the mainstream world if the mainstream world was accepting enough to value them as human beings."

Patricia values her kids, and the strongest message she teaches them is to value them-

selves. It is a lesson she learned in a long and difficult search.

"There came a time in the 80's when I began studying my own mind to see what was there. Your mind is like a warehouse with all the different stuff you've parked in it over your lifetime, and when you reach your forties there's a lot of stuff there. I really started looking into the corners and boxes of my own mind. I was really pretty shocked at what I found there. Instead of believing myself to be pagan, I had a lot of residual Christian thinking. Like the scientists and their notion of the Big Bang. That's straight out of the Bible. I don't care how pagan somebody may think he or she is, that's not the way real pagans see the universe. The native people, the real pagans, see the universe as an unending circle. There isn't a beginning and there isn't an end.

Patricia Nell Warren radiates the calm of a traveler who, though she will paddle vigorously from shore to midriver in her determination to make things better, she no longer fights the river's course.

"In this particular life I am who I am, and I'm somebody who's trying to step beyond labels and synthesize, pull things all together and see a bigger picture. If I have been a gay man and a lesbian and a straight woman and a straight man in many past lives, then what do the labels mean? In the native world, mixed-bloods were seen as people who move between cultures."

From the crossover of her novel to her willingness to reach out to the youth who are marginalized in a marginalized community, this wise woman most certainly moves between cultures enough to fill the moccasins of the mixed-bloods who came before.

AVENGERS

continued from 13

bers.

It's hard not to tell more tales about this group. Their stories abound, as do their enthusiasm and their passion for on-the-edge, outrageous action. Their energy is empowering and exciting, says Amy Little, and even if she's not in committee meetings or press conferences, Nora Gause says she's avenging 24-hours-a-day. So if you've never met an Avenger, keep your eyes out. They could be the ones jogging around your local parking lot.

Starting new Avenger chapters is simple, and the group offers start-up kits and handbooks. Call the San Francisco (415/267-6195) chapter for information.

TRANSGENDER

continued from 14

"strongly urge" transgender inclusion in ENDA '95. NLGLA has since reaffirmed their support. Joining them in transgender-inclusiveness are the National Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Veterans of America, the Lesbian and Gay Bands of America, and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, whose Policy Institute just announced "Creating Change, The National Conference for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Movement."

For decades, the university gender clinics that instituted programs for transsexuals required them to be heterosexual, to assimilate in the larger culture and be lost. In the last decade there has been a revolution, the clinics are gone, the assimilated queer-

hating clinicians have been deposed, and gendertrash from all over have begun to band together, and compare lives and choices. Genderqueers, no longer prevented from being who they are, no longer having to lie about sexual orientation to get hormones and surgeries, have taken their place alongside other queer folk who refuse to assimilate, who refuse to safely stay in the closet and demand equal rights.

People like Leslie Feinberg, author of *Stone Butch Blues*, and Kate Bornstein, playwright, and author of *Gender Outlaw: On Men and Women and the Rest of Us*, have pushed the envelope of gender beyond convention and into the consciousness of American literature and politics by the facts of their lives and their work.

The recent activism at the Michigan Women's Music Festi-

val, where a transsexual woman was expelled on the suspicion she was transsexual in 1991, and where four transsexual lesbians were expelled in 1993 for stating they were TS, saw a contingent of a transsexual, an intersexed, a transgendered woman, a he-she, and three non-transsexual womyn escorted into the Festival by the Lesbian Avengers. They were greeted with cheers and approval. Nearly 70% of womyn attending the festival the previous two years had expressed approval of trans-inclusion.

Last November, a San Francisco police officer, Stephan Thorne, transitioned on the job (another man born in a female body). This August, the first ever FTM (female to male) International Conference will be held in San Francisco.

Transgender Liberation—whether it's the overthrow of traditional gender oppression, homophobic oppression of diesel dykes, stone butches, nannies, fags, radical fairies, cross-dressers, transvestites, drag kings and queens, transgendered, transsexual, transgressively gendered, and those whose gender is so complex it hasn't been named yet—even at its nascent state, is not going away, will not go back in the closet, and is not going to be well behaved.

Additional information: FTM, 5337 College Ave. #142, Oakland, CA 94618, Voicemail (510) 287-2646, e-mail FTM News@aol.com; International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, 5707 Firenza St., Houston, TX 77035-5515, Fax (713) 723-1800.

Movies

Wall To Wall Divas And Two Girls In Love

by Chris Narloch

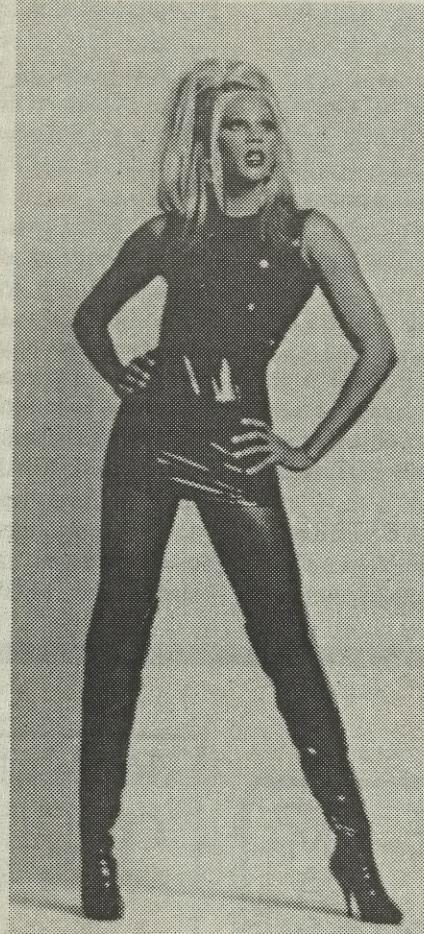
Barry Shils' new movie about Wigstock, the annual outdoor drag festival in New York, is a triumphant tribute to those courageous souls who dare to transcend their 'ordinary' lives with a little war paint, a lot of attitude and hair to spare.

Technically a documentary, "Wigstock" is so cheerful and upbeat, it's more like a big gay-positive party captured on film. Musical acts Crystal Waters and Deee-Lite are interspersed between performances by legendary drag queens including RuPaul, Lypsinka, Mistress Formika and The Lady Bunny, hostess and mastermind behind the event.

"Ms. Bunny" organized the festival, described as the Super Bowl of drag, ten years ago in order to bring cross-dressing out of the closet and into the light of day.

A gay variation on Woodstock, the event is held each Labor Day in downtown Manhattan and now commands a crowd of 20,000 people.

The first performer up is Mistress Formika, who gets things off to a soulful start with a dead-on rendition of 'Age of Aquarius' from "Hair." Prowling the stage with pride, she sets the tone for the film. The director frequently cuts to the crowd, many of whom look even more outrageous than the 'girls' on stage. The movie is a 90-minute celebration of camp, and there's none of the dark side



RuPaul stands tall in "Wigstock".

who have both gone on to international acclaim, offer the most polished sets, but it's lesser known acts like Joey Arias and Donna Giles who really heat up the stage. A duo called the Duelling Bankheads do a hilarious version of 'Born to be Wild' dressed in business suits, and a performer named Floyd does a striptease to the tune of 'What Makes A Man A Man' (he shows us.) The highpoint, for me, though is an enormous queen in a fat suit who enacts a live birth on stage -- it's one of the most bizarre sights in recent film his-

of drag on display here (you have to rent "Paris Is Burning" for that.)

"Wigstock" employs a behind-the-scenes approach that sheds light on the endless hours spent on hair and make-up preparation and on getting the lip-synching perfect. It gives drag its due and shows how this segment of the gay community has fought hard for their freedom of self-expression. Love it or hate it, you have to admit that these men have invented their own world, and they LIVE it.

RuPaul and Lypsinka,

Alyson Levy/Fine Line



"Two Girls" stars Nicole Parker & Laurel Holloman.

tory and definitely worth the price of admission.

To be honest, the movie doesn't boast the greatest production values -- it looks like a really good home movie. But then that's sort of appropriate for a 'let's-put-on-a-show' event like Wigstock. Ultimately, the spirit of the artists shines through. Their heart and their humor are as big as their hair.

THE INCREDIBLY TRUE ADVENTURES OF TWO GIRLS IN LOVE

Maria Maggenti's new movie is another example of a film whose material rises above its execution. Maggenti's no Steven Spielberg, but her heart's in the right place. And she's smart enough to cast two adorable (and talented) actresses in what is probably the first interracial teenage lesbian romantic comedy ever made.

"Two Girls" details the sweet tale of tomboy Randy (Laurel Holloman) and rich girl Evie

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(Nicole Parker), who fall in love and then face opposition from family and friends. Randy, who's white and boyish, is sure of her sexuality while Evie, who's black and more feminine, is exploring after breaking up with a boyfriend. They meet at the gas station where Randy works part-time and before long are publicly holding hands in a diner.

The girls consummate their curiosity at Evie's place while mom is away on business, and their relationship develops honestly and delicately. The rest of the story, involving Randy's 'ex' and home life, is not as well-crafted as the main plot. Still, when the two

young actresses kiss they convey a convincing and healthy teenage lust that made me wish I had been as brave in high school.

P.S. To Kate...love, faith and my undying gratitude. To my friends at the latest Issue, it's been a pleasure. And to everyone who's read my column over the past few years, I thank you. See ya at the movies.

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Rumor Has It

by Stephanie Carlisle

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BERKELEY

offended Stephanie's tender sensibilities, be prepared for your comeuppance...

FIRST AND FOREMOST ON MY LIST is the Sacramento AIDS Foundation. Now, don't get me wrong. We need an effective, efficient and humane organization to connect people stricken with HIV to crucial services. The local foundation at one time met the need. I had the experience of accompanying my late lover to SAF in 1989 where a woman named Gloria hooked us up with SSI Disability benefits in a few short weeks. And later in his illness, home nursing was provided through the auspices of the foundation. However, I believe that since 1993 things have deteriorated to the point that those people who have been clients are denied help when they need it the most. Ample evidence has been printed in THE BEE and I have heard from several clients personally, that SAF has reportedly turned into a ineffective, inefficient and inhumane behemoth, existing only for the aggrandizement of its Board of Directors. Stephanie would be glad to take this up with Scott Christianson, Joyce Mitchell, or anyone else on the Board. My advice would be to DISSOLVE THE BOARD, hire an indepen-

dent accountant, allow a public disclosure of the books and start back at square one helping those that SAF's mission is sworn to help. Thank you very much!

NEXT... Twentieth Street hustlers are ruining the 'gay strip' in my opinion. Now, I'm not talking about lonely underage kids who can find support at the Lambda Center. You all know about the adult cruisers who never go into bars except in the hope of scoring a drink, some drugs, money or someone's bicycle. We must all take some responsibility in discouraging this activity. It's not like the cops are gonna come scare them off. The general attitude of the police toward our community is a whole other pet peeve that I won't get into here.

NO MORE BITCHING. I need to convey a special birthday greeting to John Fogarty, a.k.a. 'BT'. Falcon is planning to give you a "special picture book" for your 50-something birthday on July 21st.

SUMMER BEACH/BOAT PARTIES are taking place on the American River. Thanks to Jim and Grant, Sunday afternoons have taken on a festive flare on those really HOT weekends.

THE TEN PERCENTERS, a group of gay and lesbian employees at the state Employment De-

velopment Department had a fabulous display commemorating Gay Pride throughout the month of June. Word got out through the department and certain people complained that the state was 'endorsing the homosexual lifestyle'. I wish these people would get a 'life' of their own and stop talking about 'style', which they obviously know nothing about. Special thanks to architect John Terry for his artistic contribution.

DELTA LAMBDA PHI is holding its National Convention in San Jose the weekend of July 23rd (my fortieth b-day!). The Sacramento State (IOTA) chapter is sending about a half-dozen brothers to the downtown Hilton to make their presence known. YOU GO LAMBDA MEN!

ONE MORE birthday greeting to Yolanda Marin who will be 26 on the 9th of July...just a baby.

SPECIAL TO KATE: You and I both know what a bitch it is to deal with issues of mortality when you're in your thirties. My philosophy of life has changed over the last ten years that I have lived with HIV. It has become one that emphasizes living in the HERE AND NOW. If you do that, every new day we live becomes its own special moment. So, I say to you 'carpe diem'—'seize the day'. I LOVE YOU.

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Off The Edge

by Stacy Selmants

Swan songs are never easy; it's too hard to stay on key. As you know by now, this is not the latest ISSUE, it is the last issue. The only thing I can tell you here in the uneasy quiet of this 3 a.m. writing spurt is that unforeseen "goodbyes" -- like this one -- really suck.

Some things never change, and the fact that this column is being written about five hours before they literally pull the plug on me is nothing new to Kate or to the rest of the editorial staff. Yep, those of us who really DO live teetering on the edge, had to cut it this close, one last time. (Once I cut it a tad TOO close and Kate good naturedly informed me the paper had already gone to press. "But just think how EARLY you'll be for next month!" she said with a mocking grin.)

I met Kate about 12 years ago, when I was an editor and she did circulation and wrote the bar column for another paper here in town. With the arrogance of extreme youth and with self-anointed authority as a "trained journalist" I would give her lectures on grammar and punctuation, including the (correct) suggestion that exclamation marks were REALLY meant to be more than decorative ways to !!!spice!!! up a column and should probably only be used when writing, "He yelled, 'Fire!'" I think she may have forgiven me for those lectures, by now.

We both exited that paper, and then drifted apart for a few years, until I ran into her again at some queer political event or another, and she felt the need to confess to me her new dream.

"Promise not to laugh," she said, with a certain amount of apprehension, (remembering my cocky grammar lectures of the past) "I've decided to start a new paper. I've been working hard on it for months."

"Cool," I said. "When's your first issue? Can I help?"

After a couple of issues, (okay, I was a LITTLE skeptical) I joined the paper, and through the first struggling months -- working out of a cramped spare bedroom in her house -- where everyone was on the low end of the learning curve, we winged it, with a certain amount of ama-

teur grace, a little luck and a lot of old Aretha tunes at full volume.

Michael was designing it, Kevin did the layout; it looked fabulous. Kate was a natural businesswoman with a sense of faith and an unwavering vision of what she wanted the paper to be. Sara wrote some great editorials and provided lots of financial (and emotional) backing. I just wrote piles of copy and behind the scenes tried to make sure everyone's stories contained nagging little things like nouns and verbs. The important thing was: we got the thing out. Every month. On time. People started noticing; we got even better, and even won some gay press awards.

Over the years, I was given more editorial freedom and slack than I may have deserved -- more so than most of the other writers, partly because I actually AM a "trained journalist" and partly because Kate remembers who was there at the beginning. I landed most of the truly "fun" assignments:

There was the time I dressed in "faux-Amish" drag and pretended to be a fundamentalist for a day at the Traditional Values Coalition legislative briefing where ACT UP stormed the

meeting, the police came and I was on camera looking like Stan Atkinson's wife. There was the springtime "love and sex survey" where we invaded Faces one Sunday and randomly snatched people and forced them to fill out surveys describing "your dream date," where we discovered that men really ARE just looking for a man with tight buns and women prefer dates with a high credit limit. There was a "torment the lovelorn" series when we arranged a series of blind dates (again, in that fabulous random Sunday-at-Faces kind of way) and actually FOLLOWED THEM on their dates and then wrote about it. I was sent to DC to cover the '93 March on Washington -- a week which changed the way I look at life, forever. (It's also amazing how many pretty people will buy you drinks when you're wearing a press pass.)

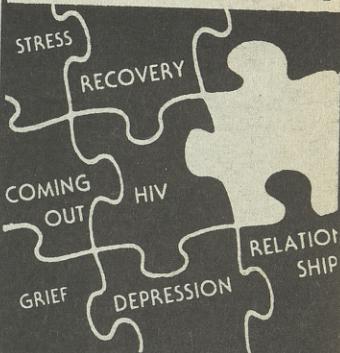
Then there's this column. It's been self-indulgent, and overwhelmingly bizarre -- a place to vent my frustrations and to poke fun at my friends, my enemies and most of all myself. I was given complete carte blanche to write whatever silly things came into my head. I'll probably never have this much freedom, or this much fun again.

It's been a great run but it's

over, because Kate is folding the tent, to concentrate all her energy on fighting her way back to a healthy recovery. I may check around to see what other newspaper types will have me. Or I may just concentrate again on writing my novel. These days, fiction seems to be easier; it's life's ugly little realities that are hard.

Bon voyage, Kate. Thanks for everything. Love, Stace.

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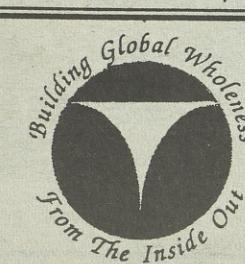
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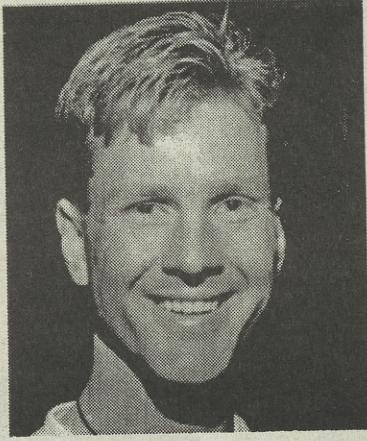
What Is Worth Protesting?

by Steven Luse



Nicki Anderson

"...Like Pete Wilson running for President."



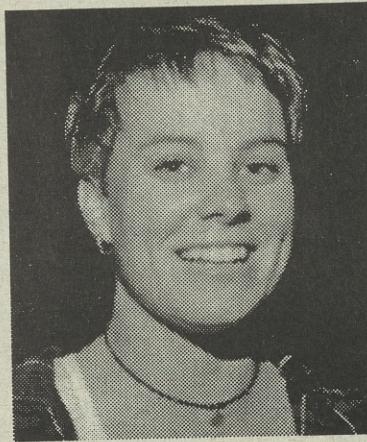
Kevin Koci

"At this point, Equal Rights for gays, as in Marriage."



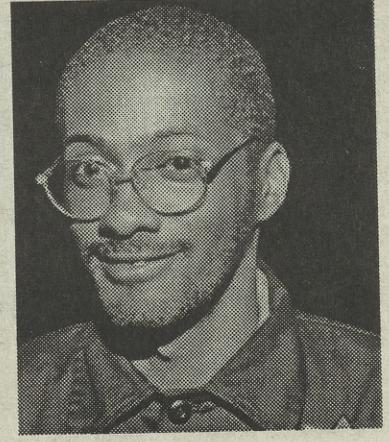
Krystel Powers

"The things that we think are wrong."



Amy Blankenfeld

"Anything that goes against our rights as Americans."



Travis Epps

"Everything, if you ask me, everything but the necessary things."

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Horoscope

July gets all burners roaring away with a massive planetary march through sensitive Cancer and ultimately into proud Leo.

The Sun (our personal mission in life), Mercury (how we think) and Venus (how we love) all get energized as they figuratively bounce off each other. Let's go for the gusto, friends. The time is ripe for change and we are just the gang to do it.

ARIES

Center most of your activities close to or right at home since your heart, mind and complete sense of well being centers there this July. Family issues and unresolved matters involving the dominant parent in your life may take a turn for the better. Good! It's time to get on with your lifestyle.

TAURUS

Balanced and carefully pondering gay Bulls wax poetic with wise observation. Ask and you shall have it, but don't rely on friends to offer it to you. There are still some nasty patches with pals that need to be worked out and it can't be rushed. Everything takes time ...

GEMINI

Money matters take on an increased importance but don't worry; everything appears to be on track. You have done the appropriate homework to see that finances are under control. It's a shame that the same thing can't be said for your career. Problems still exist as the learning phase continues.

CANCER

This is your month to shine as your personal magnetism soars. It is an excellent time to meet as many new people as possible and charm the pants off them. Relationships also need some attention; there may be something going on there that you are not seeing properly. Cast off the illusions and demand respect.

LEO

Leos achieve major karmic points

by volunteering for a worthy gay cause. The more you give, the more you get, so choose a charity to support and jump right in. Take the time to air out a closet and explore psychological barriers that hold you back from true happiness. Breakthroughs are possible.

VIRGO

Friends reaffirm our sense of self and personal pride and give us confidence as well as plain old good times. Encourage friendships this July and put all important projects on the front burner. It is an excellent time for new beginnings because you have the energy and the stamina to get the whole thing off the ground.

LIBRA

Day to day chores may still be sticky and problematic, but long term goals appear to be on track. If you have kept a watchful eye on finances, you may begin to see a huge transition from famine to feast. If you have been negligent, then the opposite is true.

SCORPIO

Personal transformation continues apace. (Or maybe you're just mellowing with age?) Travel is the keynote so head for parts unknown and enjoy yourself. It may be difficult to tap your creative side, but don't despair; you just need to find a more suitable outlet for your muse. If it ain't poetry, maybe it's theater.

SAGITTARIUS

Career takes off like a rocket blast. Thankfully, all that professional energy has not quelled your sexual appetite. Merging on many deep levels with that special someone is particularly important to your sense of personal happiness (as it is for all of us). Money may arrive through the kindness of others.

CAPRICORN

All is not lost. I sense there is someone there to lend support. Relationships are particularly important to you now so try to maintain the balance between partners and the urge to get out and see the world. Why fret? You needn't explore alone. Don't they say that two heads are better than one?

AQUARIUS

Detailed projects may be just what the doctor ordered so dive right in! Anything involving psy-

chology or mystery will be an especially tempting target. Who knows? It may lead you down an entirely new professional path.

PISCES

You learn by doing ... and perhaps failing, but each setback is a valuable lesson in itself. Believe it or not, you will persevere. The temptation is to party hearty and forget your stumbling blocks, but try to find time for both work and pleasure. The reward for work will be much sweeter in the long run.

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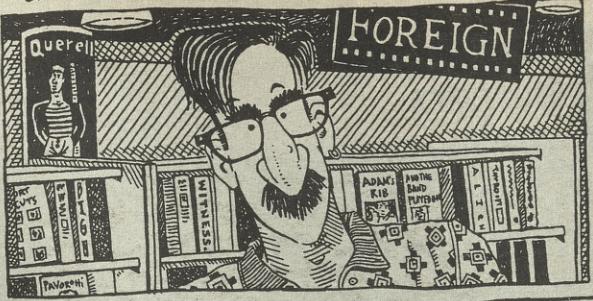
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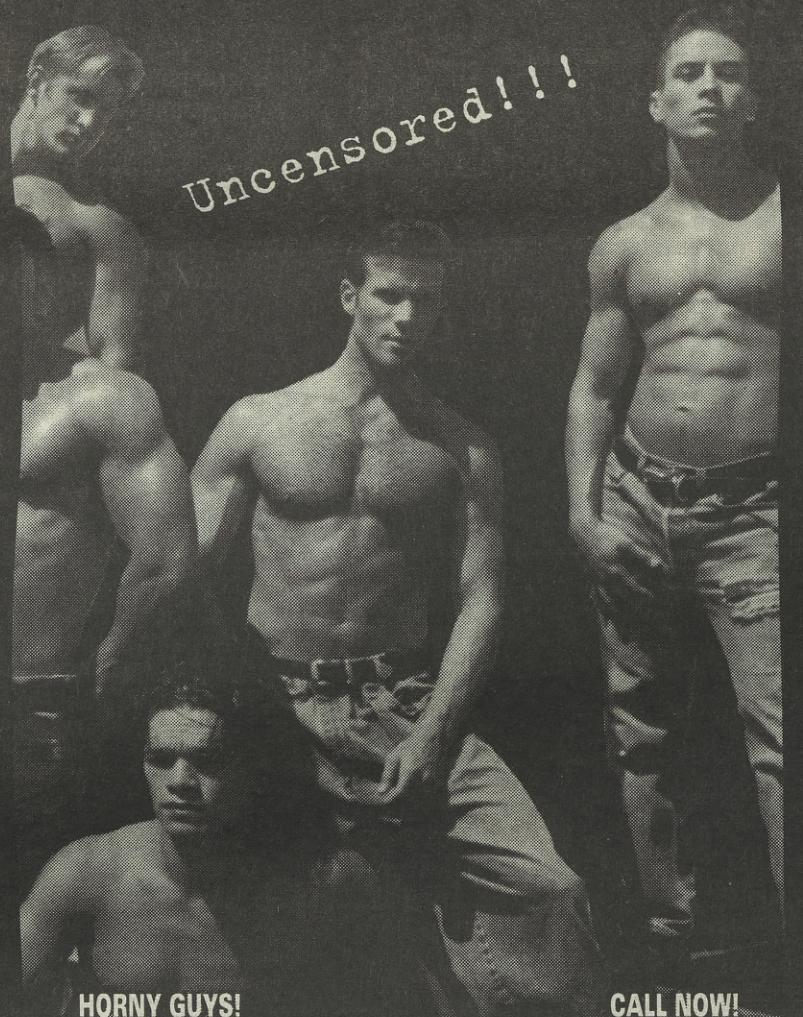
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